

William Anderson Buildings
(Harpers Ferry National Historical Park)
Shenandoah Street
Harpers Ferry
Jefferson County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-173

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
WRITTEN DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

THE WILLIAM ANDERSON BUILDING

HABS No. WV-173

Location West Side of Shenandoah Street, Harpers Ferry National Monument, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

Present Owner Government Owned

Present Occupant None

Present Use Vacant

Brief Statement of Significance

The building was erected in 1838-39. Between 1839 and 1861 the first floor was a Dry Goods Store and the upper floors were used as a residence. This building is located in the block of structures between Potomac and High Streets which was the downtown area of Harpers Ferry during the Civil War. This area was in the vicinity of the John Brown raid in 1859.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This building was erected in 1838-39 by William Anderson and George B. Stephenson. It is known today as the Anderson Building or Bldg. No. 11. It was erected simultaneously with the building next to it on the south, known as Bldg. No. 12 or the Bank Building. A fire wall separates them. The Anderson Building fronted 32 feet on Shenandoah Street and was 40 feet 10 inches in depth according to an early description. Present day measurements, however, show it to have a frontage of 31'-4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and a depth of 40'-4" $\frac{1}{2}$ ". It was originally built as a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ story brick building with a slate roof and stone cellar. When completed, it had one large store on the first floor and the upper 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ floors were designed for use as a residence. There were nine rooms in the upper portion of the building. An extra kitchen with pantry was erected at the rear by Anderson probably in the early 1840's prior to 1846. This addition has been previously recorded.

The building was badly damaged during the Civil War and when repairs were made after 1865, a fourth story was added.

A frame porch with balcony was attached to the front part of the building at one time. This is shown in photographs from the 1862-65 period. This porch has since been removed.

Between 1839 and 1861 the first floor of the Anderson Building was used as a dry goods store and the other floors were used as a residence. The building was first used by William Anderson and his brother Samuel as partners.

In 1841 this partnership was dissolved and William Anderson operated the store alone until 1842. Israel and Joseph L. Russell rented the premises from Anderson until January, 1846. Anderson re-opened his store in February of that year with John K. Woods as his partner. This partnership was dissolved in January, 1847, when Anderson formed a new partnership with Charles Johnson. This lasted until March, 1851, when Johnson continued the store alone. The building was sold by Anderson to Daniel Ames in June, 1865.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This structure is a rectangular brick building with a frontage of 31'-4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " on Shenandoah Street and with a depth of 40'-4"±. Its ground area is 1261 square feet. It was originally 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ stories in height but when it was repaired sometime after 1865 because of war damage, a fourth floor was added. This changed the Civil War appearance of the building when it was similar to Bldg. No. 12, the Bank, located adjacent to it on the South. The original building of 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ stories had a pitched roof with dormers. In rebuilding, the dormers were left off and the full fourth story and a flat roof were added.

The Anderson Building and the Bank were built simultaneously and a party wall separates them. When completed, they apparently had the appearance of one building, with a frontage of sixty feet.

The exterior walls of the Anderson Building are of common brick. They vary in thickness from 9 3/8" to 10 1/2". The foundation is of rough cast native stone.

The front of the structure at the first floor has two entrances. The smallest, which is on the left when facing the building, leads into an entrance hall where the stairs to the basement and floors above are located. The other is the main entrance and is centered between show windows comprising a store front.

At the rear of the structure is Bldg. No. 11A, the kitchen and pantry addition of the 1840's.

The exterior, in general, is in good condition.

The interior originally consisted of a large room on the first floor for the Dry Goods Store and living quarters on the upper floors. The large room has been divided into smaller rooms by plastered partition. There are now six rooms and one fireplace in the former store area. The front room is divided from the entrance hall by a T&G wood partition. This is flanked, on the hall side, by wooden fluted Doric columns. A rear door leads to the kitchen-pantry addition.

The second floor has four rooms and a hall. It has two fireplaces. The addition at the rear is also reached through a door from the second floor. There are six rooms, two fireplaces, and a hall on the third floor. The fourth floor has five rooms and a hall.

The flooring in the building, except the basement, is random width T&G boards. The walls and ceilings are plastered and are finished with

paint or wallpaper. In general, the finish is in poor condition. There is a basement with dirt floor under the entire building. The stone walls are unfinished. A stone foundation wall separates the basement into two large rooms. A hot air furnace and coal bin are located in the west room. The present roof is flat, and the metal roofing has been covered with rolled roofing.

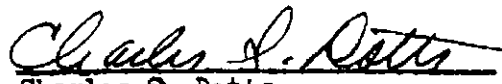
Excluding the two rooms in the basement, the building now contains 21 rooms. The interior partitions and the floors are in fair condition. The wall finish is in poor condition. The wooden stairs are in fair condition. The windows and doors appear to be the original ones and are in fair to good condition.

Structurally, the building appears to be sound; however, the third and fourth floors slope to the center of the building. This is greater on the fourth floor where the slope is approximately nine inches. This is caused apparently by the use of damaged joists when repairs were made after 1865. The door and window frames are very much out of plumb, with the result that the third and fourth floors are in poor condition.

This building is a typical store and residence structure of the downtown area of Harpers Ferry during the Civil War. The bearing of this building is N 57°E.

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